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ART VERSUS BUSINESS IN DECORATION.

BY PAUL GROEBER.



It has been well said that "before the Fall Paradise was man's home, but since the Fall home is his paradise." We live in an age, however, that is obliterating the home. Our cities grow larger year by year, and our citizens are being differentiated into two great classes, both alike hostile to the home idea, viz., the millionaires, who live in mammoth hotels, and the slaves of civilization, who live in gigantic, pestilential tenements that sap the physical and moral vigor of the inmates.

In the mad rush for getting and spending wealth we think too little of home as a place of leisure, of delight, of rest. Public pleasures grow more elaborate, more splendid; they tickle the eye, but there is no health in them. The saloon grows more gaudy in its decorations, but the private joys of home grow rare and more difficult of realization. Even the suburban cottage, which might be made a bower of bliss, can only be secured at the cost of a daily nerve-racking journey to and from the city, with no time left to cultivate the amenities of home. Again, in the uncouth arrangement of the various apartments, in the making of perpendicular stairways, and in the wall-paper decoration, all this is solely a matter of business in which art receives no consideration. With such incentives and such surroundings, the art-loving occupier of a home has all desire for an artistic expression of comfort-giving belongings withered up. He would fain be free, but is both unable and unwilling to strike the blow.

It will readily be conceded that he will require to spend many days, and even weeks, in an exhaustive search among the heterogeneous output of furnishing goods that fill our warehouses, to obtain wall-paper, draperies and carpets that have any semblance of harmony, and when these are secured he will find the wall-paper is a nondescript, the portière has Empire characteristics, and the carpet is Louis XIV., or nearly so, and that what looked so pretty in the different stores does not go together in the room.

Why such crass violators of decorative truth?

Because the people, as a whole, are densely ignorant of the laws of harmony in such belongings, and are only led by fashion, or by what their neighbor has got, or by their own childish whims, and will more readily purchase an outrage on art than anything else. The manufacturers know this, and simply create an *omnium gatherum* of all designs and colors, so that from such a madhouse of effects there will be something that will please everybody.

They are in decorative art for business only!

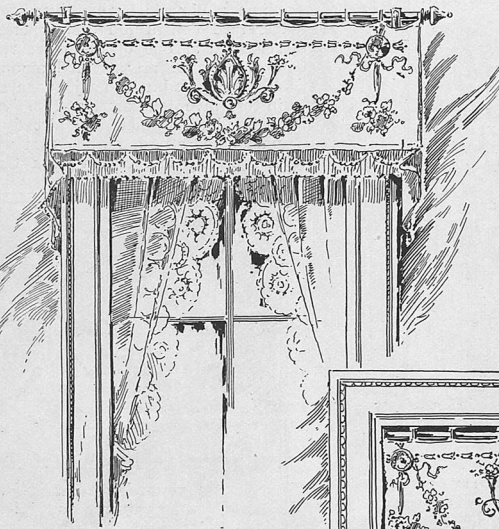
There is where missionary efforts in the interests of art should step in and lend a helping hand. But then your modern decorator is not in the missionary business. This statement, while generally true, has, God be thanked, here and there a solitary exception. There are those engaged in the industrial arts who desire to cut themselves apart from the methods and principles of their competitors, but self-preservation limits their efforts to faint upheavals in decoration that, let us hope, are the harbingers of a more glorious day. There are firms that are spending time and money in an effort to harmonize the various belongings of the modern home to the end that the home may be redeemed from costly decorative squalor, from misapplied wealth that, if rightly applied, would vastly increase human happiness.

It is the object of this article to call attention to an effort of this kind that has been going on for some time past, but which, we think, has not been appreciated at its true worth, as is the fate of all pioneer movements. Recognizing the impossibility of finding wall-papers, curtains and carpets to match, in the multitudinous productions of these materials, the wall-paper firm of Messrs. H. Bartholomae & Co., the drapery manufacturing firm of Messrs. W. Hitchcock & Co., both of this city, and the carpet manufacturing firm of Messrs. Whittalls, of Worcester, Mass., entered into a compact to manufacture some lines of their respective productions in a harmony of design and color.

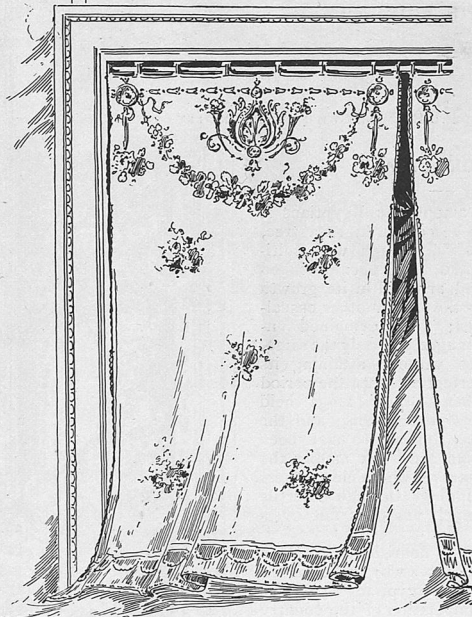
We give some illustrations of work that has been done in this direction, showing wall-paper, portières and carpets in the Empire style, and a design of a Louis XV. drawing room correctly furnished with materials that have been actually manufactured to secure complete harmony of effect.

If in our progressive age manufacturers of the different articles to make the home beautiful, should act more in harmony and cast to the winds their petty jealousies, they should have

more sentiment toward artistic products besides the almighty dollar, the best results could be obtained. As it is, the furniture maker does not want to show his new ideas to the curtain man; he in return will not "give away" his new-born fancies to the wall-paper manufacturer, and the carpet weaver guards the children of his inventive genius, and so it happens that a house cannot be fitted in harmony. If they would all work in unison, good artistic effects could be produced at reasonable prices, and the commercial interest of each of these industries would be naturally improved.

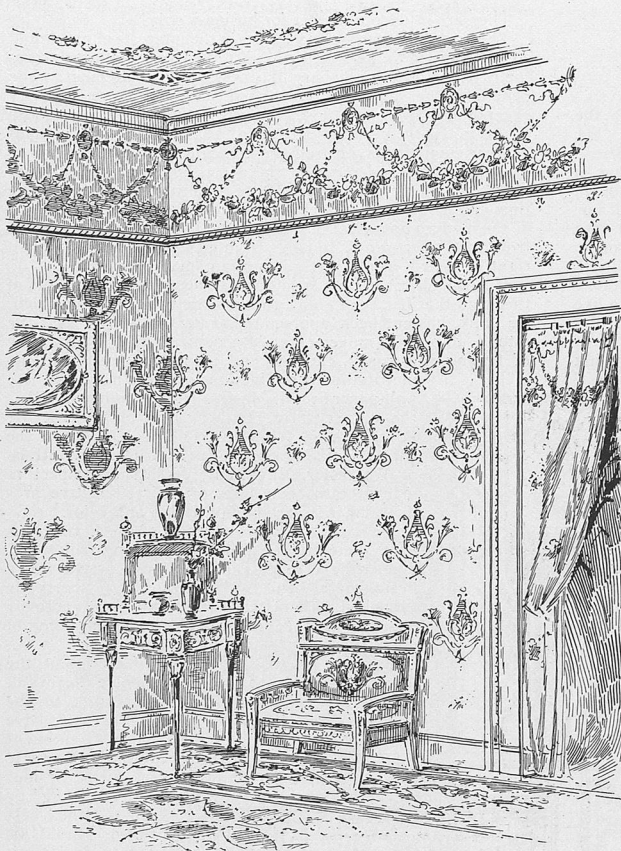


EMPIRE WINDOW DRAPERY.



EMPIRE DOOR HANGINGS.

The educational effect upon the community at large would result not only in the raising of the standard of public taste, but, what is perhaps more to the point, would enormously extend the market for art goods of every kind, for the art appetite grows with what it feeds upon.



EMPIRE WALL PAPER, MADE TO HARMONIZE WITH EMPIRE DRAPEY ON FOREGOING PAGE.

THE ORIGIN OF ART.



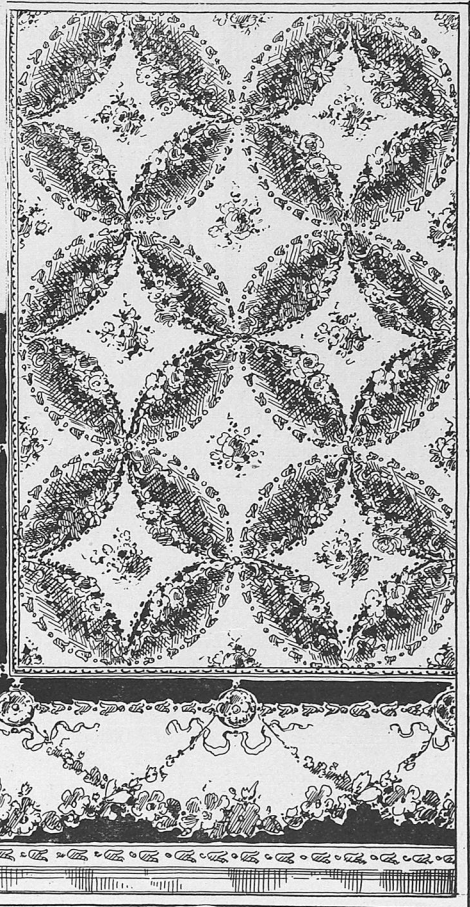
ART among the Egyptians is to be compared to a tree, which, though well cultivated, has been checked and arrested in its growth by a worm or other casualties; for it remained unchanged precisely the same, yet without attaining its perfection, until the period when Greek kings held sway over them; and the case appears to have been

the same with Persian art. But among the Greeks art resembles a river whose clear waters flow in numerous windings through a fertile vale, and fills its channel, yet does not overflow.

In Egypt art had been flourishing from the remotest periods; the causes why art flourished at an earlier date among Egyptians appear to have been the dense population of the country and the power of the kings; the latter were able to carry into execution the inventions growing out of the industrious habits to which the former gave birth. But the populousness of the country as well as the power of its kings was favored by its position and its climate. Egypt, in those earlier days, enjoyed in a

greater degree than other kingdoms tranquility and peace, by which the arts were brought into being, fed, nurtured and protected. Greece, on the contrary, was divided by numerous mountains, rivers, islands, promontories, and in the most remote periods there were as many kings as cities, the repose of which was disturbed by disputes and wars to which their proximity gave frequent occasion, a state of things unfavorable to industry and invention in arts. It is, therefore, easy to be understood why art should have been cultivated less early in Greece than in Egypt.

The superiority which art acquired among the Greeks is to be ascribed partly to the influence of climate, partly to their constitution and government, and the habits of thinking which originated therefrom, and in an equal degree also to respect for the artist and the use and application of art. The influence of climate must vivify the seed from which art is to be produced, and for this seed Greece was the chosen soil. The Greeks acknowledged and prized the happy clime under which they lived. Moderateness of temperature constituted its superiority, and is to be regarded as one of the more remote causes of that excellence of art attained among the Greeks. The climate gave birth to a joyousness of disposition; this in turn invented games and festivals, and both together fostered art, which had already reached its highest pinnacle at a period when that which we call learning was utterly unknown to the Greeks. The Greeks



CARPET MADE TO HARMONIZE WITH DRAPEY AND WALL PAPER OF INTERIOR REPRESENTED ABOVE.

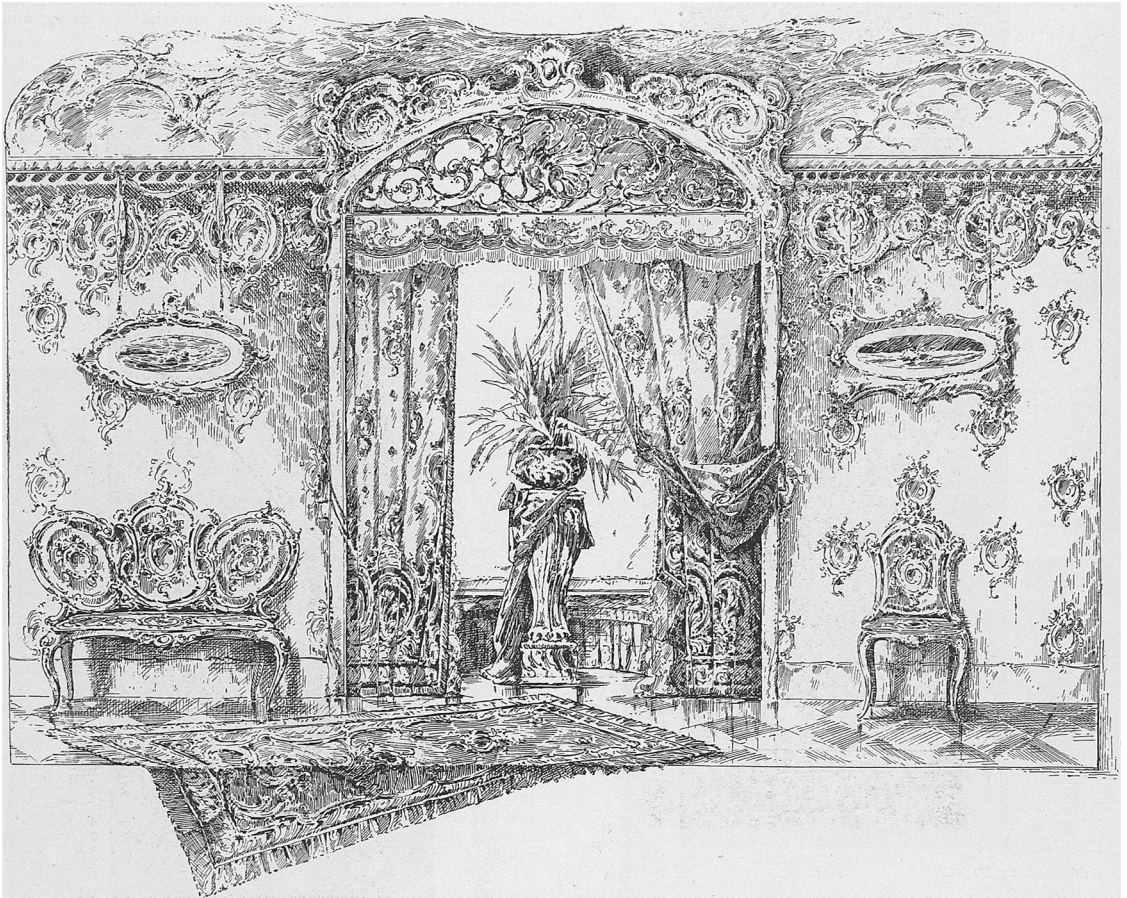
were conscious of their superiority to other nations, and among no people has beauty been prized so highly as among them. Since, then, beauty was desired and prized by the Greeks, nothing was concealed which could enhance it. Every beautiful person sought to become known to the whole nation and especially to please the artists, because they decreed the prize of beauty. Beauty was an excellence which led to fame, for we find that Greek historians made mention of those who were thus distinguished.

The Greeks were early in obtaining the gifts that followed their freedom; the thoughts of the whole people rose higher with it, just as a noble branch rises from a sound stock. As the mind of a man accustomed to reflection is usually elevated in the broad fields, and on the summit of an edifice than in a cramped and ordinary chamber, so also the manner of think-

MARQUETRY VERSUS ARCHITECTURAL DECORATION IN FURNITURE.

AS between architectural ornament and marquetry in the decoration of furniture, marquetry is best.

A feature strongly developed in 16th century furniture is the architectural character of its outlines. In the 15th century chests, screens, stall fronts, doors and paneling followed the prevailing arrangements of design in the stone work, such as window tracery and the like. But in the furniture of the reigns of Henry the Seventh and Eighth and Queen Mary in England, an architectural character, not proper to woodwork for any constructive reasons, was given to cabinets, chests, etc. They were artificially provided with parts that imitated the lines, the brackets, and other details of classic entablatures, which have



"A LOUIS XV. DRAWING-ROOM, CORRECTLY FURNISHED WITH MATERIALS THAT HAVE BEEN ACTUALLY MANUFACTURED TO SECURE COMPLETE HARMONY OF EFFECT."

ing among the free Greeks must have been very different from that of nations living under more arbitrary forms of government. The freedom which gave birth to great events and political changes among the Greeks planted, as it were, in the very productions of these effects the germ of noble and elevated sentiments; as the sight of the boundless surface of the sea and the dashing of its proud waves upon the rocky shores expands our views and carries the soul away from and above inferior objects, so it was impossible to think ignobly in the presence of deeds so great and of men so distinguished. The Greeks employed their powers of intellect not merely in the pursuit of pleasure and wealth, but in the fostering of art, and the patronage and succor and encouragement of artists.

not the same propriety when reduced to the dimensions of furniture. These subdivisions brought into use the art of "joinery." The parts necessary for the purpose of framing up wood, whether a table or a couch, a piece of paneling or a chair, offer opportunities for moldings and carvings. Some of these are proper to the thicker portions forming the frames, some to the thin, flat boards that fill up the spaces. To add a variety of moldings in making cabinets or coffers, such as sub-divide the roofs or peristyles of temples, is a departure from the carpenter's province and work, and impresses upon furniture another character by taking out of its natural and obvious shape.

Extravagance of this kind always works its own cure, and a reaction set in in the form of rich inlays of agate, lapis lazuli,